

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1A is a diagrammatic illustration of a hierarchal communication system built in accordance with the present invention.

5 Fig. 1B is a diagrammatic illustration of another hierarchal communication system built in accordance with the present invention.

10 Fig. 1C is a diagrammatic illustration of still another hierarchal communication system built in accordance with the present invention.

Fig. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a basic access interval structure used by a hierarchical network of the present invention.

15 Figs. 3A and 3B illustrate the frequency of operation periodically changing corresponding to access interval boundaries in a frequency hopping communication protocol of the present invention.

20 Figs. 4A and 4B illustrate more than one access interval being used per hop in a frequency hopping communication protocol of the present invention.

Fig. 5A illustrates an embodiment of an access interval used by the hierarchical network of the present invention wherein a reservation phase is Idle Sense Multiple Access.

25 Fig. ^{5B} illustrates an embodiment of an access interval used by the hierarchical network of the present invention wherein a device response follows a reservation poll.